

Revised 3/25/92

POLICY MANUAL

State Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services Board  
Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services

POLICY 1025<SYS>89-3

**SUBJECT:** Services Accessibility for Persons With Physical or Sensory Disabilities

**AUTHORITY:** Board Minutes Dated: May 24, 1989  
Effective Date: June 27, 1989  
Approved by Board Chairman: s/Greer D. Wilson

**REFERENCES:** Section 504, Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973  
The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 <42 U.S.C.,  
Sections 12101 et. seq.> and Regulations, Equal Employment  
Opportunity Commission, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S.  
Department of Transportation and the Federal Communications  
Commission  
Federal Civil Rights Act, 1964, Civil Rights Restoration  
Act, 1988, Architectural Barriers Act and Fair Housing  
Amendment Act, 1988  
Title 51.5, Code of Virginia <1950> as amended <the Virginians  
with Disabilities Act>  
Report of the Commission on the Coordination of the Delivery  
of Services to Facilitate the Self-Sufficiency and Support  
of Persons with Physical and Sensory Disabilities, 1992  
State Board Rules and Regulations to Assure the Rights of  
Residents of Facilities Operated by the Department, 1983  
State Board Rules and Regulations to Assure the Rights of  
Clients in Community Programs, 1986  
State Board Policies 1018<SYS>87-2, Eligibility for  
Services, 1021<SYS>87-9, Core Services, 4021<CSB>86-18,  
Evaluation of CSBs/Administration  
Comprehensive Plan, DMHMRAS, 1992-2000  
Virginia Uniform Building Code  
Community Services Board Performance Contract

**BACKGROUND:** Referenced Rules and Regulations promulgated by the State  
Board require that no resident/client of a state facility or  
community program shall be denied services on the basis of  
physical or sensory disability.

Referenced performance contract between the Department and  
CSBs requires that CSBs not deny services to persons with  
physical or sensory disabilities, and includes a signed  
statement of assurance that the CSB does not discriminate  
against such persons.



**PURPOSE:** To establish State Board policy that calls attention to the requirement that state facilities and CSBs provide mental health, mental retardation and substance abuse services to all persons in need of such services regardless of physical or sensory disabilities.

**POLICY:** It is the policy of the State Board that state facilities and CSBs, within available resources, will make reasonable accommodations to appropriately serve persons who are mentally ill, mentally retarded or have substance abuse problems and who also have physical or sensory limitations.

It is the policy of the Board that the Department and CSBs participate in interagency service planning designed to promote service delivery and resolve administrative barriers experienced by persons who are mentally ill, mentally retarded or have substance abuse problems and who also have physical or sensory disabilities.

State facilities and CSBs should be aware of services provided by the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Department for the Visually Handicapped, the Department of Rehabilitative Services, the Area Agencies on Aging and other human resources agencies, and should link persons with physical or sensory disabilities with appropriate and needed ancillary services of other agencies in a coordinated and cooperative manner.

State facilities and CSBs should make reasonable accommodations to enable persons with physical disabilities to fully participate in treatment and services. Such accommodations shall include, but not be limited to, telecommunication services for the deaf <TDD> in the Department, state facilities and CSBs and the provision of sign language interpretation or other communication modalities and devices.

Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing should have access to certified interpreters or the highest level of non-certified noncertified interpreters available, as determined by the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing quality assurance screenings.

For persons with visual impairments, the opportunity should be available for confidential oral completion of forms/documents and other adaptations of visual procedures that are tailored to the person's disability and preferred method of communication/mobility. Escort services should be available if needed, and guide, hearing or service dogs shall be allowed to accompany the persons in service environments, where practical.



Service providers should take into account the needs of persons with physical or sensory limitations in the provision of current services or the planning of future services.

Public hearings should be conducted in barrier-free environments including meetings of the State Board, Advisory Councils and CSBs. Interpreters, communication aids and other reasonable accommodations should be available, at least upon request or identified need, and in a quantity sufficient to serve such needs so as to ensure participation by persons with physical or sensory disabilities.

State facilities and CSBs shall ensure that applicable requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Virginians with Disabilities Act are implemented. The Act addresses areas of employment practices, education, housing, transportation, public accommodations and telecommunications.

The Department is charged with the responsibility for providing direction and guidance to facilitate implementation of this policy. The monitoring of policy implementation will be accomplished through the Department's licensure and evaluation procedures.

Finally, it is the policy of the State Board to work with the boards of related agencies to examine issues, share information and promote the coordination of policy development specifically targeted to serving this population.